

1984?

THANKSGIVING FOR LIFE

November 23, 10:00-12:30

Benefit for the Gay Men's Health Crisis

The Spike



This event is produced by Empire City Motorcycle Club. 100% of the proceeds (tips and donations) will go to the Gay Men's Health Crisis, Inc. (their Hotline Publications fund).

Two free tickets to the Empire City Motorcycle Club Christmas Party (a \$30.00 value) for any donation \$100.00 or over.

A LETTER FROM YOUR GAY MEN'S HEALTH CRISIS

As we continue to work toward the goals we've set for ourselves, the Gay Men's Health Crisis wants to thank all our supporters, again, for your open-hearted response to our benefit last April and to our continued appeals for help. This letter is part of our continuing report to you. We want you to know what we have done and intend to do, and how we hope to do it.

The money

We spent about \$14,000 to stage the April 8 dance, "Showers," at the Paradise Garage, which brought us more than \$52,000. Even though many goods and services were given to us, others were not. Now that we're off and running, we aim to hold such costs as printing and mailing to the lowest possible expense. None of your contributions—and they continue to come in—has been given to *any* individual or group for *any* purpose other than to pay costs of staging "Showers." We are not now affiliated with *any* organization.

Our legal status

We are fortunate in the extreme to be represented now by a New York's law firm, Kramer, Levin, Nessen, Kamin, & Soll, as beneficiaries of the firm's *pro bono publico* legal assistance program. Our application for a charter as a not-for-profit charitable corporation is being filed now with New York State, and application to the Internal Revenue Service for tax-exempt status also is being filed for us.

Beyond "Showers"

We intend to stage several fund-raising events in the near and far future, all coordinated by Joe Hernandez. We will be present with a booth at Gay Pride Week, selling the popular red T-shirts we wore at the Paradise Garage. We are planning an art sale for the early fall, as well as several functions on Fire Island for the season. And we hope to stage a large event by winter in a major hall in the city. Our chairman of all fund-raising, Harry Diaz, is responsible for meeting a goal of \$250,000 by the end of 1982, a goal suggested by our president, Paul Popham. We think we can meet that goal.

Medical Research

One of our first stated objectives, since the group began to meet last August, has been to aid medical research into the urgent problem of diseases striking and killing urban gay men in the U.S., most of them in New York. Much work has been done and continues now at several federal agencies, notably the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta and the National Cancer Institute in Bethesda, Md. More funds will be distributed, but the workings of federal bureaus and large medical institutions are alarmingly slow. Meanwhile, according to a CDC official, these gay-related immunodeficiency (GRID) diseases are "a matter of urgent public health and scientific importance" (*New York Times*, "New Homosexual Disorder Worries Health Officials," May 11, 1982). Federal epidemiologists are afraid that, according to the *Times*, "tens of thousands of homosexual men may have the acquired immune dysfunction and be at risk for developing complications. . . ." This we have known for some time through Dr. Lawrence Mass's excellent pieces in the *New York Native* and *Christopher Street*; only now has the wider world recognized our very serious dilemma. Thus a committee headed by Larry Kramer (and including Dr. Mass and Dr. John Raftis) is being formed now, along

with a disinterested board of medical advisors from New York and California, to solicit research grant proposals and judge which of them will receive your funding. This group should be formed within three weeks to begin considering a number of immediately useful projects, work that will help all of us lead healthier, less troubled lives. In the meantime, we recently cosponsored, with New York University Medical Center, an open and free-of-charge forum on the GRID problem; three physicians—Drs. Alvin E. Friedman-Kien and Linda Laubenstein of N.Y.U. and Dr. Dan William—spoke to a large audience on the risks and perils of the syndrome. We intend to sponsor several more such programs in the near future as part of our effort to inform those who are interested.

Our newsletter

The first issue of our newsletter was distributed free at the Gay Pride Rally. We want to let you know, in the simplest terms, exactly what is known now about GRID diseases and what is not. So much conjecture and unfounded rumor circulates among gay men that we feel there is a growing threat to our mental as well as physical health. We do not advocate taking *any* measures; each man must do what he feels is right for him. But we want you to know who is saying what, how the arguments stand, what is fact, and what is fiction. And we want to serve the community as a posting board, to find out what *you* need and how *we* can help. In the meantime, unsettling though it is, *no evidence exists* to incriminate any activity, drug, place of residence, or any other factor—conclusively—in the outbreak facing us. As the *Times* declares: "The cause of the disorder is unknown." And it remains unknown one full year after the outbreak began.

How to help

As we sort ourselves out from the unexpected success of our benefit, we recognize the high degree to which we are accountable not only to our immediate donors, but to the larger concept of responsible people. We now find that we badly need help in a number of professional and technical areas—ranging from services such as typesetting and printing to advisors on publicity and on staging a large entertainment event. We need all sorts of people to help, above all people who don't mind hard work. We hope to expand the range and diversity of our group. We welcome all who are concerned. And we appreciate deeply the offers extended to us to stage other fund-raising events.

Because we are, finally, accountable for what is done in our name, we ask that those who would do so have our permission, in writing, before they do it. If you are approached by any outfit seeking donations on our behalf, you have a right to know that your contribution will, in fact, go in some part us.

You can help

We continue to seek contributions both of funds and services. Below is a form we urge you to fill out and mail to us at the address on the bottom of this column. Your contributions may be made payable to:

Gay Men's Health Crisis

If you wish to volunteer for any of our projects, in any way, we welcome your help. Please give us a brief description of what you wish to do, how you would like to help.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, & ZIP _____ PHONE () _____

VOLUNTEERING OFFER _____

Gay Men's Health Crisis
Box 274
132 West 24th Street
New York, NY 10011

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